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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY,
DECEMBER 31, 2002

¶11. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for December 31, 2002. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

¶12. MILITARY BUILD-UP ALONG IRAQI BORDER
(Cumhuriyet) Deployment along the Turkey-Iraq border continues prior to the possible U.S. operation against Iraq. Turkish military continues with infrastructure works in the region in preparation for the operation. Within this framework, additional materials and equipment are being transferred to both sides of the border. Military units sent to the border area have settled in trailer parks and pilgrimage facilities near Silopi's (Sırnak) Habur border gate. In addition, civil defense directorates in Sırnak and Hakkari provinces are working on measures to be taken against a possible influx of refugees (from Iraq). Evrensel quoted the Elazığ Civil Defense Director, Celal Cihan, as stating that (Elazığ's) underground shelters were not secure against chemical and biological weapons (attacks).

¶13. INCREASED DISTURBANCE IN THE SOUTHEAST
(Milli Gazete) Disturbance among people in Hakkari, a Turkish province on the Iraqi border, has reached a peak due to the possible U.S. attack against Iraq, with residents taking intense anti-war security measures. Some residents have sealed their windows and doors with nylon against chemical weapons attacks. Hakkari people are concerned about their relatives in Iraq as well.

¶14. AKGUNDUZ CAN NO LONGER BECOME MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
(Hurriyet) Fadil Akgunduz, who was elected a Member of Parliament from Siirt in the November 3 parliamentary elections, lost his eligibility to run for parliamentary elections because the Supreme Court upheld a two-year prison term and a fine of TL 750 million (approx. USD 455) given to him by an Istanbul court for violation of the "Capital Market Law." Sought for swindling for a long time, Akgunduz entered the Parliament after November 3, gaining parliamentary immunity. However, he lost his standing and immunity when the elections in Siirt were cancelled. Then, he was arrested and ordered to remain in custody.

¶15. INVESTIGATION AGAINST ELECTRICITY THIEVES
(Turkiye) The Turkish Electricity Distribution Corporation (TEDAS) Diyarbakır Directorate launched an investigation against 13 TEDAS employees who had been using electricity illegally.

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

¶16. SMUGGLED IRANIAN FUEL OIL SEIZED
(Turkiye) Van Jandarma seized a total of 21.2 tons of illegally-imported Iranian fuel oil in Baskale township.

¶17. SHARES TO ISDEMIR WORKERS
(Radikal) Eleven per cent of İskenderun's (Hatay) Isdemir Steel Plant's shares were transferred to Isdemir workers in a December 30 ceremony.

HOLTZ